

The Music Critics Association of North America and
the National Arts Journalism Program at Columbia University

in partnership with

The Columbia University Department of Music

present

SHIFTING EARS

A Symposium on the Present State and Future of Classical Music Criticism

October 15-17, 2004
Columbia University School of Journalism
New York City

This conference is made possible through the generous support of a New York-based charitable foundation; Columbia University Music Department; National Arts Journalism Program at Columbia University; the Fritz Reiner Center for Contemporary Music at Columbia University; Baltimore Sun, Cleveland Plain Dealer, New Jersey Star-Ledger, St. Petersburg Times, Newsday, Toronto Star; and an anonymous donor

SCHEDULE

Friday, October 15

5:00 p.m.: Opening reception at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Kaplan Penthouse.

Guest speaker: **Ned Rorem**, composer, who will begin with a reading of an article he wrote in 1982, "13 Ways of Looking at a Critic," and continue with his updated views of criticism, followed by questions and general discussion.

(Mr. Rorem's presentation is generously underwritten by the Star-Ledger of New Jersey)

Saturday, October 16

(all events at the School of Journalism Lecture Hall, 3rd floor, Columbia University)

MORNING

9:00: Welcome: **Andras Szanto**, director, National Arts Journalism Program

9:15: Keynote speaker: **James Conlon**, music director designate of the
Ravinia Festival and the Los Angeles Opera

A conductor reflects on criticism from the receiving end - and from
both sides of the Atlantic

10:15: The Right Words: Adapting Language to Describe an Ever-Changing Art

Moderator: **Ara Guzelimian**, artistic adviser, Carnegie Hall

Participants: **Osvaldo Golijov**, **Meredith Monk**, **Mark Swed** (*L.A. Times*)

As the vocabulary of music changes, so must the vocabulary we
use to write about it. The early 20th century critic Louis Elson was evidently thinking of 19th
century definitions of "melody" when he accused Debussy of lacking any. Do
we run the risk of repeating that mistake when we sling around terms
like "development," "harmony," and "climax?" And how do we convey the
novelty of sounds?

11:30: Speaker: **John Rockwell**, Cultural Critic, *The New York Times*

In his essay, "Serious Music Today," Rockwell argues that "classical" and "serious" are no longer
synonymous, and that music critics need to open themselves up to that fact. The dominance of pop
music today and the emergence of journalism online have created a new environment for the critic.

AFTERNOON

1:30: Speaker: **Joseph Horowitz**, author and consultant, who has just finished his latest
book, "Classical Music in America."

Horowitz' essay "Criticism at the Crossroads," describes the historic shift in assumptions underlying
classical music criticism. He argues that American classical music has degenerated into a culture
venerating the act of performance over the act of creation. The critic, according to Horowitz, should
become a "doer and an organizer" on behalf of classical music.

2:15: Looking Back to Look Ahead: How Music Criticism Has Changed in 100 Years

Moderator: **Alan Rich**, *Los Angeles Weekly*

Participants: **Anthony Tommasini**, *The New York Times*; **Tim Page**, *The Washington Post*;
Greg Sandow, NewMusicBox.com; **Barbara Zuck**, *The Columbus Dispatch*

Do music critics serve the same function that they did in earlier times? Have the increasing
constraints of journalism forced us to become less detailed and more general? We ask a panel of
experienced critics what role music criticism can play in today's fragmented and competitive society.

3:45: Who Are We, Anyway? Presentation of early results from the
First Survey of Classical Music Critics in North America.

Willa Conrad, Music Critic, *New Jersey Star-Ledger*; **Lawrence McGill**,
Director of Research and Planning, Cultural Policy and the Arts National Data Archive,
Princeton University Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies

4:30: The Gatekeepers' View: Editors Discuss Changing Paradigms in the Arts Beat
Moderator: **Wynne Delacoma**, *Chicago Sun-Times*

Participants: **John Habich**, Fine Arts Editor, *Newsday*; **Chris Lavin**, senior editor for special
sections, *San Diego Union-Tribune*; **James Oestreich**, Classical Music & Dance Editor, *The*
New York Times; **Susan Elliott**, editor, Musical America online

Each newspaper has a unique vision of arts coverage, yet there is also a national standard. This panel
explores five views of arts coverage: what factors determine how much coverage is accorded to
classical music vs. the other arts and why, and what new areas of knowledge and journalistic skills an
effective classical music critic must possess today.

Sunday, October 17

MORNING

9:00: The Limits of Style: Do Non-American Critics Write More Freely?

Moderator: **William Littler**, *Toronto Star*.

Participants: **Shirley Apthorp**, *Financial Times* (Berlin); **Charles Michener**, *New York*
Observer; **Martin Bernheimer**, *Financial Times* (New York);
John Allison, Opera and *The Times* of London; **Renaud Machart**, *Le Monde* (Paris)

"Where is style?" Stephen Sondheim asks in "A Little Night Music." He might have been addressing
today's North American music critics, whose writing leans toward the careful and the mild, rather
than the colorful and even provocative means of expression European critics enjoy using. How can
our writing appeal more directly and powerfully to the reader? We explore the topic with some of the
finest stylists in our profession.

10:30: Writing New Music: Composers and Presenters Take the Floor.

Moderator: **George Steel**, executive director, Miller Theatre, Columbia University

Participants: **Michael Gordon**, founder of Bang on a Can; **Welz Kauffman**, executive
director, Ravinia Festival, Chicago; **Jane Moss**, vice president for programming, Lincoln
Center for the Performing Arts, New York

How must the protocol of how music is presented change in order to survive? This panel explores
new ways of thinking and experiencing classical music.

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constraints of journalism forced us to become less detailed and more general? We ask a panel of
experienced critics what role music criticism can play in today's fragmented and competitive society.

1:15: Teaching Critics: The Place of Journalistic Criticism in
Undergraduate and Graduate Studies

Moderator: **Scott Burnham**, Princeton University

Participants: **Walter Frisch**, Columbia University; **Jan Swafford**, Tufts University and
author of "Charles Ives: A Life in Music"; **Johanna Keller**, Syracuse University

What can critics teach musicologists, and vice versa? Where does the interface between the two
professions need to be made more porous, and how might critical thinking be better injected into
higher level music education?

2:45: The Pulitzer Bidges

Moderator: **Frank J. Oteri**, editor, NewMusicBox.org

Participants: **Joshua Kosman**, *San Francisco Chronicle*; **Sig Gissler**, Pulitzer Prizes

Administrator; **Gunther Schuller**, composer; **Patrick Smith**, critic and author

The Pulitzer Prizes have adjusted their rules in order to elicit a broader range of submissions, and
actively encouraged the entry of musical theater works, film scores and improvised or non-notated
pieces. Does this represent a rush of enlightenment or a dumbing down? And are a few changes in
wording enough to make a difference in what sorts of music are deserving of prestige?

4:00: Now What? A Speculative Conversation on the Critic of the Future

Justin Davidson, *Newsday* and **Alex Ross**, *The New Yorker*

Summarizing three days of trend-spotting and debates, two critics glean some lessons, both for
themselves and their successors.

ADJOURN

Biographies of "Shifting Ears" participants

John Allison is Editor of Opera and a Music Critic on The Times of London. Born in 1965 in Cape Town, South Africa, he studied performance, musicology and composition for his BMus and PhD degrees, and while at university was also assistant organist at Cape Town Cathedral. He has written for leading newspapers around the world, including the New York Times, and is a regular contributor to BBC Music Magazine. He is the author of two books (Edward Elgar: Sacred Music and The Pocket Companion to Opera), and has contributed articles to the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians and New Penguin Opera Guide, as well as a chapter on 'Sibelius and the Kalevala' in the recently published Words on Music: Essays in Honour of Andrew Porter.

Shirley Apthorp was born in Cape Town, South Africa. She grew up in various parts of Australia. Her student years were spent in Tasmania, avoiding violin practice by writing about music for the local newspaper. After a stint as chief music critic for the Hobart +Mercury+, she bought a one-way air ticket to Europe. Since 1996 she has lived in Berlin, writing reviews and feature articles for magazines, newspapers and web-sites in the UK, Australia, the USA, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland and Germany. She travels extensively. Her current employers include the Financial Times, Bloomberg and Opera Magazine. When not working, she likes to sail, dive, jog, or watch a DVD with her husband and a bowl of popcorn.

Martin Bernheimer, chief music and dance critic of the Los Angeles Times from 1965 to 1996, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1982. He has been heard regularly on the intermission features of the Texaco/ Metropolitan Opera broadcasts in addition to broadcasts of the CBC. He serves as New York music correspondent for the Financial Times of London and Opera magazine, and writes frequently for Opera News. In addition to widespread engagements as a lecturer, he has been commissioned to write program articles for Carnegie Hall, the San Francisco Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, Orange County Performing Arts Center, New Jersey Performing Center and Pittsburgh Opera. His television credits include scripts for Plácido Domingo and the Washington Opera and the Metropolitan Opera. His articles have appeared in such publications as Vanity Fair, Newsday, Saturday Review, Music Quarterly, High Fidelity, Stereo Review, The Nation and, on the internet, andante.com. He has contributed to both the New Grove Dictionary of Music and the New Grove Dictionary of Opera. He has written liner notes for London, RCA, BMG, Deutsche Grammophon and Columbia recordings. Recent lecture engagements brought him to Brown University and San Diego State University, and he has taught criticism at UCLA, USC, CalState Northridge and the California Institute of the Arts. He also has served as music critic for Sidewalk New York, Microsoft's internet guide to the arts and entertainment.

Scott Burnham, professor of music and chair of the music department at Princeton University, is the author of *Beethoven Hero* (Princeton, 1995), translator of A. B. Marx, *Musical Form in the Age of Beethoven* (Cambridge, 1997), and co-editor of Beethoven

and *His World* (Princeton, 2000). His most recent writings include *Schubert and the Sound of Memory* (Musical Quarterly, 2001), *Novel Symphonies, Dramatic Overtures* (forthcoming, *The Cambridge Companion to Schumann*, ed. Beate Perrey), and *On the Beautiful in Mozart* (forthcoming, *Music and the Aesthetics of Modernity*, ed. Karol Berger and Anthony Newcomb). Burnham is currently at work on a critical study of the instrumental music of Mozart and Schubert, a project supported by fellowships from the National Humanities Center and the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

James Conlon recently completed an acclaimed tenure as principal conductor of the Paris Opera. He previously served as general music director of the City of Cologne, Germany, where he was principal conductor of the Gürzenich Orchestra-Cologne Philharmonic. He has been music director of the Cincinnati May Festival, America's oldest choral festival, since 1979. A native of New York and a graduate of The Juilliard School, Conlon made his New York Philharmonic debut in 1974 and has since appeared with nearly every major North American and European orchestra. He has conducted more than 200 performances of a diverse repertoire at the Metropolitan Opera since his 1976 debut, and has appeared at many other major international opera houses. He is a champion of the works of Alexander Zemlinsky and of music by composers who perished during the Holocaust. Conlon becomes music director of the Ravinia Festival in 2005, the same year he also becomes music director of the Los Angeles Opera.

Willa J. Conrad, classical music critic for the New Jersey Star-Ledger since 1997, is a graduate of Peabody Conservatory's music criticism program (Masters of Music, 1990) and in the fall of 2003 was a fellow at the National Arts Journalism Program at Columbia University. Prior to writing for the Star-Ledger, she was music and dance critic at the Charlotte (NC) Observer and the Toledo (OH) Blade, and a freelancer for the Baltimore Evening Sun.

Justin Davidson Newsday's classical music critic since 1996, won the Pulitzer Prize for criticism in 2002. Davidson grew up in Rome and moved to the U.S. to attend college at Harvard and continue his studies in classical guitar. He completed a D.M.A. in music composition from Columbia in 1994, and among the honors he received as a composer was an award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. During his time at Newsday, Davidson has wandered far beyond the confines of his beat, writing series about guns in America and changing definitions of masculinity, for example. In 2002, in addition to covering classical music, Davidson was appointed Newsday's first architecture critic.

Wynne Delacoma, classical music critic of the Chicago Sun-Times since 1991, has been writing and reviewing for the paper since 1982. Her articles on music also have appeared in Opera News, Symphony and Chamber Music magazines, BBC Music magazine, American Record Guide and Jazziz Magazine. She also is an adjunct faculty member at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, where she teaches a graduate-level course in arts reporting and criticism. She has been teaching at Medill since 1982. Delacoma earned her bachelor's degree in journalism from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wis., and her master's degrees in music history and literature from

Northwestern's School of Music. Before joining the Sun-Times, she was a dance and classical music critic at the Milwaukee Journal. She is a board member and co-chair of the music committee at the Arts Club of Chicago and a former board member of the Music Critics Association of North America. She has won a Peter Lisagor Award for arts criticism from the Chicago chapter of the Society for Professional Journalists.

Susan Elliott edits MusicalAmerica.com, for which she has received an ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award. She is also a free-lance music, theater, and dance critic for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and has in recent years contributed to the daily New York Times, Newsday, and Symphony magazine. Prior to moving to Atlanta to be Communications Director for the 1996 Cultural Olympiad, she was based in New York, where for seven years she was a critic for the New York Post and contributed to Opera News and the NY Times Arts and Leisure section. Other past incarnations include being managing editor of the late, great High Fidelity magazine.

Walter Frisch is H. Harold Gumm/Harry and Albert von Tilzer Professor of Music at Columbia University in New York, where he has taught since 1982. He has also been a guest professor at the University of Freiburg in Germany and has lectured on music throughout the United States, and in England, France, Spain, and Germany. His writings have been translated into French, German, Japanese, Spanish, and Italian. Professor Frisch is a specialist in the music of composers from the Austro-German sphere in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, ranging from Schubert to Schoenberg. He has written numerous articles and two books on Brahms and is co-author, with George S. Bozarth, of the Brahms article in the second edition of the New Grove Dictionary (2000). Professor Frisch's newest book, which will appear in Spring 2005 from University of California Press, is *German Modernism: Music and the Arts*, which investigates the relationships between music and its cultural context in Austria and Germany during the period 1880-1915. He is now serving as General Editor for a new series of music history textbooks from W. W. Norton, and is writing the volume on the 19th century.

Sig Gissler, award-winning journalist and former editor of The Milwaukee Journal, is the administrator of the Pulitzer Prizes and a professor at Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University. A graduate of Lake Forest College, he joined the faculty in 1994 after more than 30 years in deadline journalism. He has taught courses on reporting and writing and on coverage of racial and ethnic issues. He served as the school's academic dean in 1997, and in 1998 was voted "distinguished teacher of the year" by the school's students. In 1999, under the banner of "Let's Do It Better," Gissler founded the school's Workshops on Journalism, Race & Ethnicity for news media professionals, raising more than \$1 million in Ford Foundation support and serving as the workshop director for two years. In 2002, he was named to his Pulitzer post and also received a Presidential Teaching Award, one of five out of 300 Columbia professors nominated. He has been a journalism fellow at Stanford University and senior fellow at the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center.

Osvaldo Golijov was born in 1960 in La Plata, Argentina, and, after living in Jerusalem for 3 years, immigrated to the U.S. in 1986. His omnivorous musical tastes have led him to compose for and collaborate with artists such as the Kronos and St. Lawrence string quartets, Dawn Upshaw, David Krakauer, Robert Spano, the Boston Symphony, the Rock en Español supergroup Café Tacuba, the Romanian Gypsy band Taraf de Haidouks, film directors Alejandro Gonzalez Iñárritu and Sally Potter, the Schola Cantorum de Caracas, the Orquesta la Pasion (created especially for *La Pasion Segun San Marcos*) and many others. He is currently composing a symphony that will serve as the basis for the soundtrack of Francis Ford Coppola's next epic film, *Megalopolis*.

Michael Gordon, composer, is co-founder of Bang on a Can. His newest recording, *Light Is Calling*, was recently released on Nonesuch Records. Upcoming projects include *Lost Objects* at BAM in December with Concerto Köln; *The Sad Park*, a new work for the Kronos Quartet, and a new opera based on B-movie star Acquanetta for the Aachen Opera.

Ara Guzelimian has been senior director and artistic advisor of Carnegie Hall since September 1998. His responsibilities include program planning and development, as well as the creation of a range of audience education programs. From 1993 to 1998, he was artistic administrator of the Aspen Music Festival and School in Colorado. He previously served as artistic administrator of the Ojai Festival in California, and he was associated with the Los Angeles Philharmonic as producer for national radio broadcasts and as artistic administrator. At Carnegie Hall, Guzelimian initiated a series of artistic conversations called *Carnegie Talks*, in which he hosts extended dialogues with major musicians, as well as the *Making Music* composer series. Active as a writer, lecturer and radio producer, he was editor of *Parallels and Paradoxes: Explorations in Music and Society*, a collection of dialogues between Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said. In September 2003, the French government awarded him the title Chevalier des Arts et Lettres.

John Habich is arts editor of Newsday, supervising coverage of classical music, dance, theater, visual arts and architecture. He worked previously at the Star Tribune in Minneapolis-St. Paul in several capacities including fine arts editor, features editor and Sunday-magazine editor. A 1999-2000 midcareer fellow at NAJP, whose advisory board he recently joined, he has taught at the National Critics Institute of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center and served on the board of the Center for Arts Criticism. He lives in Greenwich Village.

Joseph Horowitz was a music critic for The New York Times from 1977 to 1980. His books are *Conversations with Arrau*; *Understanding Toscanini: How He Became an American Culture-God and Helped Create a New Audience for Old Music*; *The Ivory Trade: Music and the Business of Music at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition*; *Wagner Nights: An American History*; *The Post-Classical Predicament: Essays on Music and Society*; and (for young readers) *Dvorak in America: In Search of the New World*. From 1992 to 1997, Horowitz served as artistic advisor and then executive director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, resident orchestra of the

Brooklyn Academy of Music, and there pioneered in juxtaposing orchestral repertoire with folk and vernacular sources. He has subsequently served as an artistic advisor to many American orchestras, most regularly the New Jersey Symphony and the Pacific Symphony. He has also co-founded, with the conductor Angel Gil-Ordonez, the Post-Classical Ensemble, a chamber orchestra in Washington, D.C. He is the author of "Classical Music" for both the Oxford Encyclopedia of American History and the Encyclopedia of New York State. His magnum opus, *Classical Music in America – A History of its Rise and Fall*, will be published by Norton in March.

Welz Kauffman became president and chief executive officer of the Ravinia Festival, the oldest music festival in North America, in 2000. He is responsible for the administration and programming of the Festival. He is known for programming a wide variety of ambitious music rarely heard in a festival setting. One of Kauffman's primary goals is to build back the audience for classical music. In 2003, he created One Score, One Chicago, a partnership with Northwestern University and the Chicago Public Library based on One Book, One Chicago. Kauffman expanded Ravinia's Steans Institute for Young Artists in 2002 with a Vocal Chamber discipline, which was launched by commissioning Ned Rorem to write the acclaimed song cycle *Aftermath*. Kauffman was instrumental in selecting James Conlon as the next music director of Ravinia Festival, effective with the 2005 season.

Johanna Keller is Director of the Goldring Arts Journalism program at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University. The new program is the first MA arts journalism program at an accredited journalism school and begins July 2005, offering concentrations in architecture, film, fine arts, music, and theater. Keller writes about music and literature for The New York Times, London Evening Standard, Los Angeles Times, Opera News, Strad, Symphony and elsewhere. For her essays in The New York Times, she received the 2000 Deems Taylor Award and the 2001 Front Page Award from the Newswomen's Club of NY. She has been a journalism fellow at USC Annenberg Getty and at the Banff Centre in Canada.

Joshua Kosman has been a music critic for the San Francisco Chronicle since 1988, and was named chief music critic in 1993. He writes about all aspects of music, with a special emphasis on contemporary composition. He received a B.A. in music from Yale College and an M.A. from the University of California, Berkeley. He is a contributor to the New Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians, 2nd Edition, and the New Grove Dictionary of Opera, and his writing has appeared in the Journal of Musicology, Piano & Keyboard, Strings, Symphony, Music & Musicians and other publications.

Chris Lavin is Senior Editor/Special Sections of the San Diego Union-Tribune. He previously worked as Assistant Managing Editor of the St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times and was a reporter for many years in St. Petersburg, Rochester, New York, and Geneva, New York. He is a graduate of Hobart College (Anthropology). Lavin is currently a senior judge for the annual Hearst Collegiate Journalism competition. He is the proud father of one child, 11-year-old Will, who just won a part in an upcoming community theater production of *L'il Abner*.

William Littler is a native of Vancouver, British Columbia, where he studied piano, music theory and history and graduated from the University of British Columbia. He was music and dance critic of The Vancouver Sun before assuming the same posts with The Toronto Star. A board member of the Music Critics Association of North America, he is also a founding vice president of the Paris-based International Music Critics Association and was founding chairman of the Dance Critics Association. Littler has taught at York University, the University of Waterloo and currently lectures at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto and teaches a music criticism course at McMaster University. He has appeared as a judge at major music competitions. He was the first music critic to win Canada's National Newspaper Award for critical writing.

Renaud Machart Trained as a musicologist and as a professional singer, Renaud Machart is staff music critic for the leading daily French newspaper Le Monde, artistic director of the archive recording series « Ina memoire vive » and the host of a daily radio show on France Musiques. He is the author of the first book on the American composer John Adams (*Actes Sud*, 2004) and one of the contributors to « The Proust Project », to be released by Farrar, Straus & Giroux this fall.

Lawrence T. McGill is director of research and planning for the Cultural Policy and the Arts National Data Archive (CPANDA) at Princeton University, the country's first digital archive of research data on the arts and culture. He is often interim deputy director of Princeton University's Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies (CACPS) at the Woodrow Wilson School of International and Public Affairs. McGill was formerly director of research for The Freedom Forum, a nonpartisan, international foundation dedicated to promoting public understanding of First Amendment freedoms. Previously, he was manager of news audience research at NBC, where he conducted audience studies for NBC News programs, including research that led to the development of *Dateline NBC*. McGill has taught at Medill School of Journalism and in the department of sociology at Northwestern University.

Charles Michener writes a column about classical music for The New York Observer and is a cultural journalist about music, film, art and food, whose profiles have appeared in The New Yorker, The New York Times Magazine, Town and Country, The Atlantic, Vogue, Vanity Fair, Esquire, Newsweek, Time and other publications. From 1973 to 1983, he was chief cultural writer and Senior Editor for Cultural Affairs at Newsweek. He was the founding editor-in-chief of The Movies magazine in 1983. And from 1995 until 1983, he was a senior editor at The New Yorker. He is currently working with Joseph Volpe, the General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera, on his memoirs. He grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, where he was an avid follower of the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell. He holds a B.A. degree from Yale University, and has a master's degree in journalism and international affairs from Columbia University. He lives in New York City.

Meredith Monk is a composer, singer, creator of new opera, musical theater works, films and installations. A pioneer in what is now called "extended vocal technique" and "interdisciplinary performance," she has created more than 100 works. She is a recipient of numerous, prestigious awards, including a MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship, two Guggenheim Fellowships, three "Obies" and a "Bessie" for Sustained Creative Achievement. In 1968 Ms. Monk founded The House, a company dedicated to an interdisciplinary approach to performance. She formed Meredith Monk & Vocal Ensemble in 1978 to perform her unique compositions. Her music has been performed by numerous soloists and groups including The Chorus of the San Francisco Symphony, Musica Sacra, Pacific Mozart Ensemble, Double Edge, Bjork, and Bang On A Can All-Stars, among others. Her first orchestra piece 'Possible Sky' commissioned by Michael Tilson Thomas for the New World Symphony premiered in April 2003 in Miami. She is currently working on her first string quartet for the Kronos Quartet.

Jane S. Moss is Vice President for Programming for Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, a post she has held since 1992. Responsible for over 250 presentations annually, which complement the offerings of its constituent companies, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts is one of the largest arts presenters in the world and a significant force in classical music presentation nationally and internationally. During her tenure, Moss has revitalized Lincoln Center's ongoing programs, as well as created major new initiatives such as the *Lincoln Center Festival*, the *New Visions* series, which links the worlds of the theater and classical music, and *Lincoln Center's American Songbook* focused on the American popular song. These new programs join longstanding series such as *Great Performers*, Lincoln Center's major season-long classical music series, and summer series such as the *Mostly Mozart Festival*, *Midsummer Night Swing*, and *Lincoln Center Out of Doors*, the country's largest free outdoor multi-disciplinary festival.

James Oestreich is currently a music critic of The New York Times and the classical music and dance editor of the Sunday Arts and Leisure section. He had been assistant to the editor of The New York Times Arts & Leisure section since July 1993. Mr. Oestreich joined The Times in June 1989 as a staff editor. Before that, Mr. Oestreich was editor of *Opus* in New York City from 1984 to 1989. From 1979 to 1983, he was the classical music editor for *High Fidelity*; from 1970 to 1979, he was a proofreader, translator and editor at the corporate law offices of Breed, Abbott & Morgan, and from 1965 to 1966 he was a childcare worker supervising emotionally disturbed and delinquent boys at Mount St. John School in Deep River, Connecticut. Mr. Oestreich is an adjunct professor of music at New York University. Born in Watertown, Wisconsin, on April 22, 1943, Mr. Oestreich received a B.A. degree in philosophy from the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1965.

Frank J Oteri is a New York City-based composer and writer about music. He has served as the editor of the American Music Center's web magazine, *NewMusicBox*, since its launch in May 1999. Oteri is an outspoken crusader for new music. Interested in blurring musical genre distinctions, he has been the master of ceremonies for ASCAP's *Thru The Walls* showcase and Meet The Composer's "The Works" in Minneapolis, and has served as the curator for his own series, *21st Century Schizoid Music*, at Greenwich

Village's Cornelia Street Café. Oteri holds a B.A. and a M.A. (in Ethnomusicology) from Columbia University, where he served as classical music director and world music director for WKCR-FM.

Tim Page won the Pulitzer Prize for Distinguished Criticism in 1997 for his writing about music for The Washington Post. He is the author and/or editor of more than a dozen books including *The Glenn Gould Reader*, *William Kapell*, *Selected Letters of Virgil Thomson*, *Dawn Powell: A Biography* and *Tim Page On Music*. From 1982 to 1992, he was the host of a program on WNYC-FM in New York, where he presented hundreds of radio premieres. He later served as the founder and first executive producer of BMG Catalyst and as the artistic advisor for the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. As a child, he was the subject of an award-winning documentary, *A Day With Timmy Page*, which chronicled his activities as a 12-year old filmmaker

Alan Rich, a native of Boston, wasted four years on a pre-med degree (Harvard, '45) while landing a stringer's job on the Boston Herald and, later, the New York Sun, Musical America and the Monterey (Calif.) Herald. An M.A. in Musicology (U.C. Berkeley, '52) led to more respectable writing at Pacifica Radio, a brief stint at The New York Times and The Herald-Tribune (chief critic, 1963-67), and that lamented journal's spin-off, New York Magazine. California again beckoned; since 1980 he has conducted radio series on contemporary music for Los Angeles Public Radio and, since 1992, been Classical Critic for the area's thriving alternative journal, LA Weekly. His books include *Music, Mirror of the Arts* (Praeger/Ridge Press, 1969), *The Simon & Schuster Guides to Classical Music, Opera* (1981), *Play-by-Play* (4 volumes, with CDs, Harper-Collins, 1995), *American Pioneers, Ives to Cage and Beyond* (Phaidon, 1995) and several CD-ROMs.

John Rockwell is senior cultural correspondent of The New York Times. At The Times he has been a classical music critic, classical music editor, chief reviewer of classical recordings, chief rock critic, European cultural correspondent, editor of the Sunday Arts & Leisure section and a weekly arts columnist. He was also the founding director of the Lincoln Center Festival. He has written three books and innumerable freelance articles and essays.

Ned Rorem, a native of Richmond, Indiana, has been hailed for his vast repertoire of chamber, orchestral, operatic and choral works, and also for his diaries and criticism. He holds degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied with Bernard Wagenaar, and he was a student at the Berkshire Music Center in Tanglewood in 1946 and 1947. Rorem lived in France from 1949 to 1958, when he wrote about post-war Europe in *The Paris Diary* and *The New York Diary*. He is the recipient of Fulbright and Guggenheim fellowships, an award from the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award, and the 1976 Pulitzer Prize in music for *Air Music*. Currently working on an operatic adaptation of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, he lives in New York and Nantucket.

Alex Ross has been the music critic of *The New Yorker* since 1996. His writing has also appeared in *The New Republic*, *Slate*, *The London Review of Books*, *Transition*, and *Lingua Franca*. From 1992 to 1996 he was a critic at *The New York Times*. He has received an ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award for outstanding writing in the field of music and a Holtzbrinck fellowship at the American Academy in Berlin. His writing has been chosen for the Da Capo Best Music Writing and Best American Essays anthologies. His first book, *The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*, a cultural history of twentieth-century music, will be published in 2006 by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Greg Sandow is a veteran critic, one of very few with a national reputation for writing both about classical music and pop. His work now appears in *The Wall Street Journal*, and in the past he's been a columnist for *The Village Voice*, classical music critic for *Vanity Fair* in its early days, chief pop music critic at the *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*, and music critic and senior music editor for *Entertainment Weekly*. He's a member of the Graduate Studies faculty at Juilliard, and in the past few years has worked on special projects with major orchestras, including the St. Louis Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra (where he's been a consultant), the Chicago Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Pittsburgh Symphony (where he programs and hosts a concert series for new audiences). In the '70s and '80s, he was an active composer, with four operas successfully produced. Recently he resumed his composing career, with performances at the New York City Opera's VOX showcase of new works, by the Fine Arts Quartet, and (upcoming) by the Pittsburgh Symphony. His widely-read blog on the future of classical music is at artsjournal.com/sandow.

Gunther Schuller has composed more than 160 works in virtually every musical genre. The son of German immigrants, he was born in New York and studied flute, horn, and theory, advancing rapidly enough as a hornist to join the Cincinnati Symphony as principal horn at 17 and the orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera at 19. Schuller became actively involved in the New York bebop scene, performing and recording with such jazz greats as Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, and John Lewis. At the age of 25, Schuller taught at the Manhattan School of Music, beginning a distinguished teaching career; his positions have included professor of composition at the Yale School of Music, president of the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, and artistic director of the Tanglewood Berkshire Music Center and The Festival at Sandpoint (Idaho). His love of a wide range of American music guides the activities of his recording company, GM Recordings. G. Schirmer recently acquired his Margun and GunMar publishing companies. He also serves as editor-in-chief of the forthcoming Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Editions, co-director (with David Baker) of the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra, and music director of the Spokane Bach Festival. His observations on conducting are contained in his book, *The Compleat Conductor*. Among his many awards are the Pulitzer Prize (1994); the Gold Medal for Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (1997); the BMI Lifetime Achievement Award (1994); a MacArthur Foundation "genius" award (1991); the William Schuman Award (1988), given by Columbia University for "lifetime achievement in American music composition"; and ten honorary degrees. His music is published by Associated Music Publishers.

Patrick J. Smith is a freelance critic, author of *The Tenth Muse*, a history of the opera libretto, past president of the Music Critics Association, past director of the Opera/Musical Theater Program at the National Endowment for the Arts and past editor of *Opera News*. He has written for many musical publications, including *The New Grove Dictionary of Music*.

George Steel has made his reputation in New York as a champion of both early and new music, as a conductor, performer, and impresario. He is founder and conductor of the Gotham City Orchestra and the acclaimed Vox Vocal Ensemble. Other recent appearances include conducting four DJs in John Cage's *Imaginary Landscape No. 5* at the Lincoln Center Festival, the complete works of Tudor composer Robert Parsons, Baroque masses by Francesc Valls and Antonio Lotti, and works of Feldman and Cage for Carnegie Hall. Steel has been the Executive Director of Columbia University's Miller Theatre since 1997, where he has earned a national reputation for innovative programming and attracting new audiences. He was the recipient of the 2001-02 ASCAP-Chamber Music America Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music, the 2003 Trailblazer Award from the American Music Center, and the 2003 ASCAP Concert Music Award.

Jan Swafford is a composer and writer on music. His work has been performed around the country and abroad by ensembles including Boston Musica Viva and Collage, New York's Philomusica, the Indianapolis Symphony, Orchestra New England, and the orchestra of the Dutch Radio. His work *in memoriam 9/11, They That Mourn*, was premiered in 2002 by the Peabody Trio. His music is published by Peer-Southern and appears on CRI Recordings. His writings include articles for *Guardian International* and *Slate*, and biographies of Brahms and Ives. He teaches writing at Tufts, and theory and musicology at Boston Conservatory.

Mark Swed has been chief music critic of the *Los Angeles Times* since 1996. He has also served as the music critic of the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* and *7 Days*, written criticism for *The Wall Street Journal*, and been the 20th-century music editor for *The Musical Quarterly*. In addition, Swed has contributed to *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The Economist*, *Musical America*, *Opera News*, *BBC Music*, *Gramophone*, *Stagebill*, *Schwann-Opus*, and many other national and international publications. He is the author of liner notes for recordings, program notes for concerts, and catalogue essays for the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art. Among his honors are an ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award and a Letter of Distinction from the American Music Center. Swed is currently writing a biography of John Cage.

András Szántó joined the NAJP in 1997 after serving as research manager of the Media Studies Center, a media research think-tank in New York. He was appointed director of the program in 2004. Szántó has co-authored and edited four books as well as numerous critical essays and research reports about culture, media and arts policy. His reporting and commentary about art, culture and politics have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The American Prospect*, *Newsday*, *Interiors*,

Architecture, Print, I.D., The International Herald Tribune, Variety, MSNBC and other domestic and international publications. Since 1997, he has overseen numerous research initiatives and conferences at the NAJP, and he has lectured extensively in academic and cultural institutions in the United States and abroad. Szántó earned his Ph.D. in sociology at Columbia University with a dissertation on New York's visual art world. He has taught courses on the sociology of culture at Columbia University and at Barnard College.

Anthony Tommasini is the chief classical music critic of The New York Times, a pianist, and the author of a biography, *Virgil Thomson: Composer on the Aisle* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), which won a 1998 ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Yale University and a doctorate in music from Boston University. This fall, Times Books and Henry Holt will release his new book, *The New York Times Essential Library: Opera, A Critic's Guide to the 100 Most Important Works and the Best Recordings*. He lives in New York City.

Barbara Zuck has been writing for The Columbus Dispatch since 1981. She was hired as the paper's Music and Dance Critic and since has been promoted to Arts Columnist/Senior Critic. A native of Upstate New York, Zuck is a graduate of Middlebury College and holds a Ph.D. in musicology from the University of Michigan. Her book, *A History of Musical Americanism*, was published by UMI Research Press. Before becoming a journalist, she taught at the University of Michigan. She has been a regular contributor to Dance Magazine and Opera News magazine and written for The New York Times Book Review, The Chicago Tribune, Musical America and other publications. She was a contributor in the area of American music biography to the new edition of the German music encyclopedia, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. She has won many journalism awards and has an affiliation with the Ohio State University, where she has tutored several aspiring critics. Her most recent enterprise is a brief weekly radio show on WOSU-AM and the WOSU-FM Classics Network (stations throughout Ohio) called "Arts Unscripted," which she co-hosts with Christopher Purdy.

The Pulitzer Prize for Music

It's Time to Alter and Affirm

A statement by the Pulitzer Prize Board, June 1, 2004

The variety, vitality and creativity of high-quality American music today make the Pulitzer Prize for Music more important than ever.

After more than a year of studying the Prize, now in its 61st year, the Pulitzer Prize Board declares its strong desire to consider and honor the full range of distinguished American musical compositions – from the contemporary classical symphony to jazz, opera, choral, musical theater, movie scores and other forms of musical excellence. The Board also notes that many composers move among those various forms and that the Music Prize competition should reflect that artistic richness.

Accordingly, without seeking to favor any particular form of music, the Board announces the following changes in the Music Prize, effective with the 2005 competition:

- First, the definition of the Prize will be revised to encourage greater diversity in entries while assuring even-handed evaluation of compositions.

Currently, the definition reads:

“For distinguished musical composition of significant dimension by an American that has had its first performance in the United States during the year.”

The new definition reads:

“For a distinguished musical composition by an American that has had its first performance or recording in the United States during the year.”

The revised definition adopts a broad view of serious music. Thus, the definition drops the words “significant dimension” in relation to a composition because the words might have limited entries by applicants or limited the evaluations by jurors. The definition also accepts the public release of a recording as the equivalent of a public performance, which will widen the prize’s reach.

- Second, the guidelines that accompany the revised definition will no longer require the submission of a score. Rather, the guidelines will say a score is “strongly urged.” That change, the Board believes, will provide sufficient latitude for improvisational work.
- Third, the jury pool will draw from a wider range of expertise. For a decade, the jury has consisted of four composers and a music critic, and all have made valuable contributions. Under the revised approach, composers will continue as a

majority of the jury but will be limited to three slots to permit greater participation by presenters of musical programs, orchestra conductors, musical artists and other knowledgeable members of the music world.

Through the years, the Prize has been awarded chiefly to composers of classical music and, quite properly, that has been of large importance to the arts community. However, despite some past efforts to broaden the competition, only once has the Prize gone to a jazz composition, a musical drama or a movie score. In the late 1990s, the Board took tacit note of the criticism leveled at its predecessors for failure to cite two of the country's foremost jazz composers. It bestowed a Special Citation on George Gershwin marking the 1998 centennial celebration of his birth and Duke Ellington on his 1999 centennial year. Earlier, in 1976, a Special Award was made to Scott Joplin in his bicentennial year.

While Special Awards and Citations continue to be an important option, the Pulitzer Board believes that the Music Prize, in its own annual competition, should encompass the nation's array of distinguished music and hopes that the refinements in the Prize's definition, guidelines and jury membership will serve that end.

Shifting Ears: Where do We Go From Here?

Alex Ross

The danger in criticism today is the decay of passion, the disease of politesse. Particularly after a few years in the business, the critic can start to jockey for position and hedge bets. You didn't really like Opera X at all, but the reputation of Composer Y is such that you don't feel comfortable panning it. Or, conversely, you loved Song Cycle Y, but the publication you write for doesn't encourage an over-the-top tone, or Composer Z is now widely seen as "overhyped" (meaning that three other critics have written rave reviews) so you describe her agreeable confection as something less than stupendously great.

We are prey to inside maneuvering, wary middle-of-the-road chatter. I do feel that the critic of today has some responsibility to — promote is not the right word, perhaps intervene, galvanize, evangelize. I don't think we any longer have the luxury of being cool observers in the Virgil Thomson mode, because we are now characters in the drama ourselves. Our existence is also at stake. We must do "outreach" and "education" just as orchestras do.

Critics writing in big local papers and national magazines are among the very few people in the public eye who even *mention* this music. Because there is such a massive shut-out of classical music on the big media level, we have a peculiar significance that critics in other genres don't possess. Roger Ebert is a famous movie critic, but Tom Cruise is rather more famous on every possible level. Whereas in our world some of the greatest musicians and composers are completely anonymous outside a circle of connoisseurs.

We're all fighters in a strange guerilla war, in which the object is not to defeat an enemy but to win a place at the table. This doesn't mean you give up objectivity and become a PR agent for the business. It means, instead, that you write with more urgency, more immediacy. The writing itself becomes crucial. Language is our secret weapon.

Justin Davidson

I see two scenarios: one a dim, Darwinian future in which classical music critics die off; the other a world in which we become the cultural equivalent of lizards - related to dinosaurs, but remarkably adaptive.

The first doesn't require much imagination. Record companies have already decided that the prestige of classical music is oversold, and newspapers and other publications follow the same logic. Orchestras devolve into antiquarian societies, their activities hardly worthy of the press' attention. Editors agree that if you don't need separate critics for painting and poster art, or for French film and Hollywood blockbusters, then surely the person who writes about the stadium concerts and teen phenom-of-the-month CDs can deal with the odd opera.

The Panglossian scenario is one I actually have faith in. It begins with a bit of urbanism. Many cities and towns are concluding that revitalizing a central business district and making it hum after hours requires a variety of cultural institutions. This doesn't mean simply supporting the metropolitan orchestra, which can have zero effect on the neighborhood, since suburbanites drive in, park and flee after the concert. Instead, it means fostering daytime arts-educational activities, smaller, more adventurous ensembles and theater groups, late-night quartet cabarets, and so on.

The assumption that culture raises property values guides a lot of decisions being made in Lower Manhattan. The mix in St. Louis or Topeka is different, but the Jane Jacobean principle is the same: cultural diversity makes a place more vibrant, safer, and economically competitive.

By the same logic, news publication in the Internet age cannot compete merely as outlets for copy produced by international news factories like AP. What distinguishes one newspaper from another is intensely local coverage — of sports, news and arts. The editor's headache then becomes to find a critic who can give the paper a distinctive voice. Critics can become resilient, and even essential, by writing vigorously — or we can potter our way into oblivion.

Shifting Ears: 10 x 2 Propositions

Alex Ross

- 1) Classical music has an actual audience and a potential audience. I try to write with both fanatical and unconverted readers in mind. The trick is in finding a language that intrigues both.
- 2) Without being vulgar or inane about it, I want to bring more of my personal experience and emotion into play. I'm done with the fleshless-priest-descending-from-the-mountaintop routine.
- 3) There is nothing shameful in unchecked enthusiasm. If I walk out dancing on air, I say it in the review, even if my colleagues smirk.
- 4) Classical critics have a bad habit of beating around the bush. I feel this genetic urge to write things like, "At times Tenor X seemed somewhat lacking in strength in the upper register." If he had no high notes, I should just say it.
- 5) If the big orchestra is playing the same repertory ad nauseam, I don't have to complain ad nauseam. Instead, I can seek out youth orchestras, new-music ensembles, chamber groups playing in inner-city schools. Critics can take the lead in showing where music should go.
- 6) Nothing is more off-putting than the critic who puts down one kind of music in order to praise another. There is no need to mention Britney Spears until such time as Ms. Spears writes her first piano quintet.
- 7) Making an intelligent pop reference is a great way to trick people into reading about classical music. I've ventured into pop and I'm sure it has changed the way people read my regular writing.
- 8) Blogs are an amazing way to forge new connections with listeners. The Internet is the ultimate arena for cultural guerilla warfare.
- 9) "Great music" and "serious music" are non-great, un-serious phrases. *What* makes it great? What is it serious *about*?
- 10) I'm lucky to be doing what I'm doing. I try to remember this every time I write.

Justin Davidson

- 1) Critics extrapolate from their own experience. We're often accused of being subjective, but music exists in an internal landscape. Translating the inchoate, internal effect of music on the spirit is a strange kind of reportage, but we should embrace this lack of distance.
- 2) Criticism of any kind needs to get outside itself. Movie reviews shouldn't just be about acting and camera angles; Music reviews should be about more than just notes.
- 3) Fear of losing the reader is not a good reason to say as little as possible. If the style is easy, the content can be hard.
- 4) Criticism becomes interesting when its range of reference is broad, and that happens most naturally when critics get practice writing outside the boundaries of their discipline.
- 5) I think of today's compositional scene as a generation in search of a synthesis, rather than a new order. In going to concerts of new music I'm always struck, not so much any more by the absence of a lingua franca, but by the need to have currents and traditions merge and jostle. Each piece becomes a little Queens, and critics have to be equipped to cover it.
- 6) We have no real power to make or ruin a musical career, but we can help smooth the journey from the fringes to the mainstream.
- 7) Yesterday's Golden Age is never news.
- 8) The probability that a concert will be very, very good doesn't necessarily justify writing about it. The question is: What's the story?
- 9) Terminology can be smuggled in under cover of metaphor. Then you get the pleasing pairing of a soft, descriptive phrase with the hard, technical term.
- 10) I try to write with the same decisiveness and passion that I demand from performers.

SERIOUS MUSIC TODAY

By John Rockwell

From my years as the chief rock critic of The New York Times in the 1970's, I am lucky to retain several rock critics, two in particular, among my closest friends. By and large, they are suspicious of Art, classical music especially: to be accurate, one is grudgingly respectful but utterly indifferent, the other hostile. Their suspicions are shared, insofar as they are considered or articulated at all, by the wider swath of rock critics, musicians and pop-culture academics who attended last spring's annual rock symposium/confab at the Experience Music Project in Seattle. Rock critics are not talking about contemporary classical music, which they never hear. They are talking about the standard repertoire, and they consider that music hopelessly irrelevant, odd-sounding and crippled by class pretensions.

Before we dismiss such ideas as ignorant philistinism, and to some extent it is just that, we should stop and think. How vital is classical music as an art form? What is the connection between the comfort food of bread-and-butter standards and edgier (or pitifully pandering) new classical composition? How is classical music supported, especially in this country, and to what extent does it fulfill spiritual vs. crassly social needs? What is the audience, and how old is it? Some of the answers to those questions fuel the rock critics' disdain.

For classical critics, these issues crept furtively to light during this summer's "critical conversation," a communal blog conceived by the intrepid Doug McLennan, founder and guru of artsjournal.com and himself a former pianist and classical critic. And, one might add, an NAJP alumnus and, now, board member.

Doug's idea was to see if a clutch of critics could identify "the next big idea" in classical music. They couldn't, which may speak to the sadly fragmented state of classical music today and may indicate that Doug's question, while properly provocative of a larger conversation, was not quite the right one to ask at this moment in musical history.

A larger conversation it did indeed provoke. We live now in a rather bland period in which everybody professes openness to everything. No more the fierce polemics of the modernists vs. the traditionalists, the serialists vs. the neo-classicists, the downtowners vs. the uptowners, or the minimalists vs. everybody else. Benign, dispassionate, mostly passionless tolerance reigns.

As an advocate of such tolerance in my 1983 book, "All American Music," I am amused and bemused by all this loving feeling. Amused, because it proves I was a good predictor of the immediate future (and I hasten to add that I haven't always been so sure-footed, as in my pronouncements in 1980 that rap was a transitory phenomenon, or in the mid-80's that the CD represented a sonic improvement over the LP). Bemused, because there is something enlivening about a good fight, and some of the lifelessness of the current

classical scene may have to do with the dulling of its polemical edge.

But lurking beneath the ripple-free surface lurks Nessie, in the form of the old resentments some critics attempted to intimidate the others by all the music they'd heard. Others trumpeted the vitality of pop over the moribundity of classical composition. Still others let their old hostility against commercially-minded vulgarity seep back up to the surface. But in the end, everyone agreed that we need to be more open to everything.

Having fought the high-low, cultivated-venacular, uptown-downtown battles for decades, I'd like to try to hasten over those hoary dichotomies here. Hence the title of this essay, which anyone who knows me will instantly understand suggests that "classical" music has no lock on "serious" music.

What do I mean by "serious"? There are those, aesthetical neo-cons of the Hilton Kramer sort, who lament the loss of standards that any erosion of classical hegemony may entail. That is nonsense. My rock critic friends are among the fiercest elitists I know, rigorously imposing judgments of quality on all the music they encounter.

The trouble with standards, and maybe their greatest glory, is that they remain stubbornly resistant to objectification. Whenever a critic has tried of "prove" the superiority of his or her favorite music, by adducing its complexity or its ingenuity within tradition or its freedom from crass commercialism, the paradigms break down under the most casual scrutiny. Simple music can be great; so can conservative composers (Bach) and radical ones (early Stravinsky); all composers relate, willingly or defiantly, to tradition, no matter how determinedly innovative; the loudest populism can be thrilling (the Rolling Stones). Standards are really the subjective taste of a knowledgeable, compelling person, reinforced by sophisticated consensus.

By "serious," then, I mean good. By "good," I mean worthy of our attention and enthusiasm, worthy of being trumpeted by those who like it to those who don't yet know it or haven't yet accepted it, worthy of rehearing and worthy of inclusion within a critical tradition that might eventually amount to a canon. I hasten to point out, to cover my intellectual-populist flank, that music that seems proudly trivial, or was conceived as a rebuke to the presumed pomposity of seriousness, like "Louie, Louie" or "Roadrunner," can be serious too, or at least seriously appreciated.

But mostly by serious I mean music that is important, to its creators and to me. And in our time, that can mean music from anywhere by anybody. Not all(ital) music by anybody and everybody, but some pieces from any genre. Which means a far broader range of music than that which derives directly from the Western classical tradition. It means jazz and rock and rap and Latin and reggae and Indian and African. It means ancient traditions and composition inspired by such traditions. It means the cheesiest pop, from Shania Twain to Bollywood. It means artists from any of those genres influenced by other genres (cf. Shania Twain's Bollywood excursions).

One index of an art's vitality is its ability to attract the interest of serious artists in other

CRITICISM AT THE CROSSROADS

By Joseph Horowitz

William James Henderson's review of the premiere of Dvorak's Symphony "From the New World," in the *New York Times* of December 17, 1893, is one of the most impressive feats in the history of American music journalism. Henderson begins:

The attempt to describe a new musical composition may not be quite so futile as an effort to photograph the perfume of a flower, yet is it an experiment of similar nature. Only an imperfect and perhaps misleading idea of the character of so complex a work of art as a symphony can be conveyed through the medium of cold type; yet when there is no other way, even that must be tried.

There follows a detailed account – of origins and intentions, methodology and programmatic allusions – that to this day may be the most evocative description of Dvorak's symphony ever penned. No one has more eloquently put into words the polyvalence of the famous Largo, in which the influences of plantation song and *Hiawatha* intermingle. "It is," wrote Henderson, "an idealized slave song made to fit the impressive quiet of night on the prairie." He continued:

When the star of empire took its way over those mighty Western plains blood and sweat and agony and bleaching human bones marked its course. Something of this awful buried sorrow of the prairie must have forced itself upon Dr. Dvorak's mind when he saw the plains after reading "The Famine" [Henderson here assumes familiarity with Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha*, which all literate Americans once knew]. It is a picture of the peace and beauty of to-day colored by a memory of sorrows gone that the composer has given us at the beginning and end of his second movement

But Henderson's review is most remarkable where it deals with the question most debated about this work a century ago: "Is it American?" Boston's critics would answer: no. To Philip Hale, of the *Journal*, Dvorak was a naïve interloper, a "negrophile" susceptible to the notion that "the future of American music rests on the use of Congo, North American Indian Creole, Greaser and Cowboy ditties, whinings, yawps, and whoopings" New York critics disagreed, none more inspirationally than Henderson:

In spite of all assertion to the contrary, the plantation songs of the American negro possess a striking individuality. No matter whence their germs came, they have in their growth been subjected to local influences which have made of them a new species. That species is the direct result of causes climatic and political, but never anything else than American. Our South is ours. Its twin does not exist. Our system of slavery, with all its domestic and racial conditions, was ours, and its twin never existed. Out of the heart of this slavery, environed by this sweet and languorous South, from the canebrake and the cotton field, arose the spontaneous musical utterance of a people. That folk music struck an answering note in the American heart. . . . If those songs are not national, then there is no such thing as